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century, confined the pictorial element to medallions set against a patterned background enlivened by garlands of flowers and other decorative devices. Of this type, which Boucher brought to its highest perfection, we have in the exhibition two attractive tapestries lent by Mrs. Frederick H. Allen. These pieces were formerly on exhibition in the room of European porcelains in Wing H, where two more tapestries of the set still remain. J. B.

### AN AMERICAN FANION AND ITS DECORATIONS

IN Gallery H 7, in a case which exhibits types of helmets and body defenses used during the Great War, there has just been placed on view a small flag, or fanion (Fig. 1), which possesses not a little sentimental interest. It was the official emblem of the first American organization which went to the front and the only one to remain under fire throughout the war. This was the American Ambulance Corps which attracted volunteers from all parts of our country, and which was, of course, transferred to the service of our government (under the title S. S. U. 5-646) so soon as the United States entered the struggle. Throughout years of suffering this American unit stuck grimly to its task. It took part in every great French engagement and many of its men were buried on the field. Its flag, which is the present one, was honored whenever it appeared:<sup>1</sup> it bears, in fact, no less than six Croix de Guerre which were pinned to it by Marshal Petain and Generals Maistre and Bruissaud, and it is decorated with two of the highly prized shoulder knots or *fourragères*, which were affixed to it by Marshals Foch and Petain.

It is about the *fourragères* that something may be said; for they concern, we believe, a detail in the wearing of armor—in spite of a differing tradition as to their origin. This tradition, repeated by French officers to Stephen H. P. Pell (who as the last member of the ambulance in service deposited the flag with the Museum), is as follows: Centuries ago the soldiers of a

<sup>1</sup>A seventh cross is shortly to be added.

certain company, having mutinied, were to be hanged, but before their sentence could be carried out an attack developed and the condemned men were called upon to aid in the defense. They went into action, so to say, with halters<sup>1</sup> around their necks. These men, it is stated, fought with supreme bravery: hence in the end they received the praise of their general and, better than this, a free pardon. Moreover, each man was permitted to wear as a badge of honor a knotted cord around his shoulder as a token of past suffering and as a



FIG. 1. FANION OF THE AMERICAN AMBULANCE NO. 5-646 S. S. U. SHOWING CROIX DE GUERRE AND FOURRAGÈRES ATTACHED

badge of heroism. The same tradition states that from that time onward *fourragères* were always treasured in the French Army as a detail of military costume, granted to those only whose valor had shone under conditions of great privation and distress.

The *fourragère*, in a word, has an interesting traditional history. And this should be accepted gladly even by a Curator of Armor (who, for the rest, is apt to be of an unbelieving and unregenerate race). It is only fair to add, however, that the origin of the *fourragère* can be explained in a more consecutive and in even as honorable a way if we examine ancient pictures and by means of them trace the changes

<sup>1</sup>"Foraging cords," used for tying up bundles of forage, or for tethering horses = *fourragères*.

which this "structure" underwent at different periods; for thus it becomes clear that the shoulder cords in question can be traced back to simpler conditions until they appear merely as "arming points," or metal-tipped laces, which served to



FIG. 2



FIG. 3



FIG. 4

"truss up" or bear the weight of a particular part of a soldier's equipment, in days when laces were used largely instead of buttons. Let us, for example, refer to three stages to indicate how the modern fourragère has developed in complexity from the simple



FIG. 5

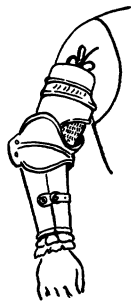


FIG. 6

shoulder lace of several centuries ago. In Fig. 2 the shoulder lace appears in its early form (sixteenth century): in Fig. 3 (late seventeenth century) it has become longer, so that it is worn looped up, its metal tip having also grown in length: in Fig. 4, which is the modern fourragère, it has grown much longer—to such a degree

that its "free end" has become braided and coiled extensively: indeed, the loop itself has grown so long that it is attached below so as to keep the cords together. Moreover, the metal tip of the lacing has also increased in size and is now a conspicuous and ornamental affair, no longer capable of being used as the tip of a lacing to be passed through an eyelet of small diameter. In all the cases figured above, the lacing is ornamental in color and texture: in fact, one of the reasons which caused it to survive in the soldier's equipment was doubtless its attractive color and its bright metal tip; for, assuredly, since the middle of the seventeenth century it had become a "rudimentary organ," as



FIG. 7



FIG. 8



FIG. 9

an anatomist would call it, in the sense that, although it survived, still it had lost its early usefulness.

Its original purpose becomes clear if we examine ancient "documents." Thus we find that instead of appearing on one shoulder only, it was earlier present on both. Moreover, it there appeared in pairs, rather than singly; in fact, it retains its doubled condition in the *aiguillette* of the modern officer—an ornamental shoulder cord which is closely related to the fourragère. The simplest stage of the shoulder cord (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) is illustrated in Fig. 5, in a portrait of a "Navigator" in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford<sup>1</sup>: a later stage is shown in Fig. 10, the Harcourt portrait (1667), where the laces are long and are

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Ffoulke, *The Armourer and his Craft*, Methuen, London, 1912, p. 108.

looped up. In Fig. 6, we see the original function of our laces—to hold up the armor for the arms—two laces being better than one for the purpose since they are more easily tied and are less apt to permit the armor to rotate out of place. We picture here the Duc de Nevers portrait in Hampton Court. We find further information in the matter if we examine pieces of armor and note that they often show a pair of holes in the upper element of the arm through which our laces were passed, Fig. 7. Sometimes these holes are furnished with brass eyelets to protect the laces from fraying, Fig. 8. Again, where the upper plate itself is not perforated, it has a leather border riveted to it which in its turn is provided with eyelets, Fig. 9.

Now it is significant that the shoulder cords are longest in the latest portrait shown (Fig. 10): by that time (1667) they had already entered upon a path of development which was foreign to their original use—for in the earlier condition they were certainly long enough to serve their purpose in tying up the weight of the armor and in leaving length enough at the tips of the laces for tying a bowknot comfortably. And, thanks to the stage shown in Figure 10, we have now the necessary proof that the shoulder cords persisted in use at a period when armor for the arms was very rarely worn, and then only in ceremonial costume by the highest officers. In a word, we here observe that the cords are undergoing a change of a particular kind which the zoölogist illustrates, under the "principle of the change of function," in such instances as when the gill-aperture of a water-breathing vertebrate becomes the ear-hole of a lizard or mammal, or when the pointed limy scale of a fish becomes from its position on the edge of the mouth the progenitor of teeth. Hence we are now able to show that in the late seventeenth century shoulder cords or laces were losing their usefulness as "arming points" and were becoming mere ornaments or "recognition marks," enabling their wearer to be distinguished as high in the order of military dignity. Therefore it is not remarkable that they should be coveted by a lower officer or an enlisted man, and

that they should finally come to be granted him, with added color and glitter, as a reward for distinguished service.

But how, one will ask, could the tradition noted above as to the origin of the *fourragère*, come into being, if it were not true? Here a Curator of Armor would shrug his shoulders, and declare that the story is vague, lacks dates, names, and place: he might add that if the tradition were true



FIG. 10. PORTRAIT (1667) OF COUNT HENRI DE LORRAINE (HARCOURT) SHOWING SHOULDER LACES

it meant merely a particular application of the principle that shoulder cords were already in use as badges of honor and that they were coveted by common soldiers even when they were about to be hanged! Then how again, one will insist, could so excellent a name as "*fourragère*" be used for the shoulder knots, if the structure in question had never been a forage-cord? Here again the answer is simple. Soldiers are known to devise amusing or figurative names for everything about them. We have only to think of the curious vocabulary which has grown up out of the trenches of the Great War to recall how true this is

in principle. We hear of "big berthas," "aces" and "duds": why should not a soldier in olden time have taken great satisfaction in explaining to a recruit that shoulder cords were used by their general for tying up hay for his horse! Or can we not picture in the French camp at Dettin-gen a bronze-faced sergeant, carefully pipe-clayed, his pigtail stiffened with tallow and flour, telling the new drummerboy (earnestly and simply) how necessary it was that each common soldier should see to it that their highest officers were provided with good long shoulder cords; for in case they developed symptoms of profanity or ill temper they could be tethered safely till their manners mended! As proof of this would not the sergeant point out that the fourragère was provided with a point which was little less than a tethering pin?

B. D.

#### RECENT ACQUISITIONS OF AMERICAN FURNITURE

A GROUP of new additions to the collection of American furniture, shown in the Room of Recent Accessions for July, represents three distinct influences found in colonial furniture of the third quarter of the eighteenth century. The first of these is English, and is seen in the set of six mahogany side chairs, whose design shows the pierced, splat back as developed by Chippendale and interpreted by American chair makers. The period was one in which the wealth of the colonies, increasing beyond expectation, was reflected in an elegance and extravagance of taste without precedent on this side of the Atlantic, when the changing fashions of the mother country, then at the culmination of a period of great elaborateness in art and life, were followed with considerable zeal, particularly in the larger settlements of the Atlantic seaboard. The backs of these chairs have the bow-shaped cresting with very bold curves, stiles with a slight outward flare at their point of junction with the upper rail, and a splat with short concave curve above a long cyma, which in its turn is resolved into a short cyma and a long concave. The carved decoration is elab-

orate and finely executed, although it lacks much of the quality found in similar English contemporary work. The center of the cresting is enhanced by an elaborated shell motive, from which project small branches of leaves. The vertical piercings are treated with three small rosettes, and the larger space above is filled with an elongated quatrefoil with dependent tassel. It is in the lower part of the chairs that their provincial origin is most obviously attested. As in most colonial adaptations of Chippendale, the seat rails are straight and undecorated, the legs rectangular and heavy, while the underbracing is unnecessarily strong. This lower part has none of the elegance of the back, but it does make up in stability for what it has lost in grace. A slight attempt at decoration has been made in the carved strip reminiscent of the Gothic taste, beneath the front seat stile. A Chippendale chair whose back is very similar in design, is in the South Kensington Museum. It has, however, carved cabriole legs with ball and claw feet, and no underbracing. This English chair is dated about 1750, and is representative of Chippendale's middle period. In addition to the interest of the individual chairs, the fact of there being a set of six matched pieces is important.

In the chest on chest, the second important item, is found the block-front treatment of the drawers, which seems to have been a distinctly American contribution to the cabinet-maker's art. This article of furniture developed from the high chest of drawers through the desire for a greater amount of drawer space than the earlier form allowed, and for which the greater lightness of the latter was sacrificed. The chest on chest was used all through New England, but the particular features of this piece—the moldings of the cornice and the treatment of the blocks—would suggest a northern, rather than a southern New England provenance. Fluted and reeded pilasters without capitals ornament the stiles and the cornice breaks above them. This cornice follows the cyma curve of the pediment, as do the two small drawers below it. Flame and urn finials finish the top. The drawers are flush with the